Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
Telephone 01-273 3000

Minister of State

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Chief Secretary
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

21 April 1980

Dear John.

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

In a letter of 11 December 1979 the Prime Minister's Private Secretary indicated that the Civil Service Department should report in the autumn about the follow-up to the decisions and recommendations contained in Sir Leo Pliatzky's Report (Cmnd 7797).

2. On a number of bodies decisions are still to be taken and a "mopping up" operation will be needed to deal with them (I attach a provisional list for colleagues to confirm). My officials will be in touch shortly with Departments about this. My aim is to put a report to the Prime Minister in early October with a view to a public statement on the outcome. If this timetable is likely to be too short in the case of some bodies where decisions were left open, it would be helpful to know that now. I hope, however, that decisions on only a very few bodies will need to be delayed beyond October.

3. Paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Report recommend that the annual reports of non-departmental bodies should be more informative in certain respects. Appropriate information about salaries and expenses of Board Members and staff (dealt with in more detail in paragraphs 45-49) should be given in published accounts. Steps should be taken to implement these recommendations as soon as possible. If there are any points of difficulty, my officials would be glad to discuss them with the Department concerned.

4. More generally, the Prime Minister's statement announced the Government's intention to adopt a more cautious and selective approach towards the creation of non-departmental bodies, and in particular towards the "hiving-off" of departmental functions to them. This does not rule out either the creation of new bodies or further hiving-off. But we should agree to this only where it is really essential, ie when the job both must be done and is much better done at arm's length from Ministers. Cabinet has agreed that proposals to set up new non-departmental bodies or to transfer

functions to (or otherwise reconstitute) existing bodies should from now on be formally discussed with CSD and the Treasury at the earliest possible stage. I should be grateful if colleagues would ensure that this is done. This procedure should apply to any non-departmental body. Points of interest to the central departments can arise with any body of this kind whether or not it has executive functions.

5. The report also contained "lessons for the future" about the framework of external controls over any new bodies created. Sir Leo's exercise was preceded by an interdepartmental study by officials of the relationships between fringe bodies and government. The aim was to establish appropriate standards of accountability and management. Relevant sections of the Pliatzky Report dealt with this problem. This left, however, a number of important proposals to be handled separately, for example, detailed arrangements for financial and manpower control. My officials will therefore prepare a guide for use by Departments covering both the proposals contained in the Pliatzky Report and those from the previous study. This will be circulated in draft for departmental comment.

6. We need to make arrangements for further reviews of existing bodies in line with paragraphs 77 and 78 of the Report. My officials, in consultation with yours, will be discussing with Departments the procedure for these. It will be important to do this economically and without elaborate machinery.

7. I propose also that the Civil Service Department should publish annually an up-to-date list of the basic information about non-departmental bodies provided in the Pliatzky Report.

8. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of Cabinet and the Minister of Transport, Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

PAUL CHANNON

REVIEW OF NON-DEPARTMENTAL BODIES: "MOPPING UP"

PROVISIONAL LIST OF BODIES STILL UNDER REVIEW OR ON WHICH FURTHER REPORTS ARE REQUIRED

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
Advisory Committee on Pesticides
Agricultural Chemicals Approval Scheme
Scientific Advisory Committee
Apple and Pear Development Council
Badgers and Tuberculosis Consultative Panel
Eggs Authority

OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES
National Film School
British Institute of Recorded Sound

CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
Computer Board
Council for Educational Technology

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT GROUP
Disablement Advisory Committees (220)
Industrial Training Boards (24)
Underwater Training Centre
Wages Councils

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Advisory Committee on Fixed Offshore Installations
Advisory Council on Energy Conservation
Severn Barrage Committee

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
Agreement Board
Ancient Monuments Board (England)
Building Research Establishment Advisory Committee
Hydraulic Research Station Advisory Committee
Historic Buildings Council for England
New Town Development Corporations (and associated bodies)
Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE (including ODA)
British Council
Institute of Development Studies
Inter-University Council

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Advisory Committee on Child Psychotherapists (Grading and Appointments)
Advisory Committee on Top Grade Clinical Psychologists Posts
Advisory Committee on Top Grade Scientists Posts

General Nursing Council
Central Midwives Board (England and Wales)
Central Council for Education for Training of Health Visitors
Panel of Assessors for District Nurse Training
Joint Board for Clinical and Nursing Studies

Medical Appeal Tribunals
National Insurance Local Tribunals
Supplementary Benefits Appeal Tribunals

National Radiological Protection Board Advisory Committee
Health Education Council
/The structure of the National Health Service is also under review/

HOME OFFICE
New Town Licensed Premises Committees (18)
Licensing Planning Committees (7)
Tribunal of Appeal: London Building Acts 1930-39
Central Committee on Common Police Services
Immigration Appellate Authorities

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
Design Council
English Industrial Estates Corporation
Iron and Steel Arbitration Tribunal

INLAND REVENUE AND CUSTOMS AND EXCISE
Special Commissioners of Income Tax
VAT Tribunals

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE AND DEPARTMENTS
Northern Ireland Agricultural Trust (abolition announced subsequent to report)
(The Secretary of State has announced that he will review all Northern Ireland bodies in the light of the decisions by other Ministers on bodies serving Great Britain)

SCOTTISH OFFICE
Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland
Central Midwives Board (Scotland)
Electricity Consultative Councils (Scotland) (2)
General Nursing Council for Scotland
Governing Bodies of Central Institutions(11)
Governing Bodies of Colleges of Education (10)
Historic Buildings Council for Scotland

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE
Nationalised Industries Consumer Councils (43)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
National Ports Council

H M TREASURY
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

WELSH OFFICE
Ancient Monuments Board for Wales
Historic Buildings Council for Wales
Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales)

Land Authority for Wales

Sarah Hackney ✓NAP

NEW ST. ANDREWS HOUSE
ST. JAMES CENTRE
EDINBURGH EH1 3SX

Nick Sanders Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON

14 October 1980

Dear Nick,

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES: THE "MOPPING-UP" EXERCISE

I refer to your letter of 6 October to Jim Buckley.

On the understanding that the "mopping-up" report is not to be made public, the Secretary of State has no objection to two of the Scottish Office bodies, namely the General Nursing Council for Scotland and the Central Midwives Board (Scotland), appearing under an omnibus "Health Departments" heading in the main part of the Report (for the record, they are wrongly credited to the Department of Health and Social Security in the report summary). For presentational reasons, however, he would prefer it if these two bodies were to be shown as part of the Scottish Office entry in the detailed list in the draft PQ Answer.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Robson

GODFREY ROBSON

Govt Machinery

Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
Telephone 01-273 3000

Minister of State

The Rt Hon George Younger TD MP
Secretary of State
Scottish Office
Dover House
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AU

16 July 1980

Dear George,

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Thank you for your letter of 10 June about the "mopping-up" operation.

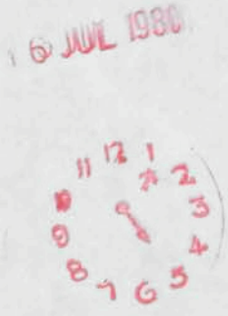
I quite take your point that many of the bodies on the mopping-up list are not necessarily candidates for abolition. The list was drawn up by reference to the Pliatzky Report itself. This identified not only bodies whose continued existence was in question but also bodies whose financial arrangements or management structures were being examined. I believe that decisions about financial savings and improved management would be just as relevant to my report to the Prime Minister as the decisions on whether bodies should be retained or abolished.

In some cases, of course, the reviews will not have been completed by the autumn. Nonetheless, I believe it would be useful to include in the report to the Prime Minister notes on the progress of reviews still underway and an estimate of the dates by which their completion is likely.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of Cabinet, the Minister of Transport and Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

PAUL CHANNON


16 JUL 1980

M

Gort Machinery

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
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TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

Secretary of State for Industry

23 June 1980

Paul Channon Esq MP
Minister of State
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
London SW1A 2AE

Dear Paul.

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 21 April to John Biffen about the follow-up to Sir Leo Pliatzky's Report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

I can confirm that the Department of Industry bodies still to be dealt with in the "mopping up" operation are as given in your list with the addition of the Furniture Development Council.

I have already taken decisions on the future operation of the English Industrial Estates Corporation and the Design Council, following the completion of reviews, so there is no difficulty in meeting your timetable. I also expect to reach a decision on the Iron and Steel Arbitration Tribunal within your timetable. Our review of the Furniture Development Council, however, is still continuing. I will decide on the future of the Council, which exists solely to collect the statutory research levy for the industry, in the light of the results of a ballot of the firms in the industry about whether or not they wish the levy to continue. The furniture industry is very diversified and over 1,800 companies need to be consulted. While I hope that a decision can be taken by October, it may not be possible to do so until the end of the year.

Officials of the Department are also taking steps to ensure that all bodies in our field are conscious of the need to comply with the Report's recommendations in paragraphs 75 and 76 that annual reports and accounts should be informative as possible. I have also noted the need to consult with your Department and the Treasury on the setting up of new or reconstituted non-departmental bodies.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours Keith.

HOME SECRETARY

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SWIH 9AT

17 June 1988

Dear Paul

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

I am sorry that I have not responded earlier to your letter of 21st April to John Biffen about the follow up to Sir Leo Pliatzky's report.

I can confirm that the provisional list attached to your letter is correct as far as the Home Office is concerned. The position on these bodies is as follows:

New Town Licensed Premises Committees

Legislation would be needed to abolish any of these committees in advance of the dissolution of the development corporations for the new towns concerned. A suitable enabling provision was included in this Session's Local Government Planning and Land Bill, but was cut out following the decision to shorten the Bill. It is possible the provision will be reinstated as a result of an Opposition amendment. If it is enacted, some of the older new town corporations may apply for their committees to be dissolved.

Licensing Planning Committees

We are proposing to the seven remaining Committees that they should now agree to be wound up.

London Building Acts Tribunal of Appeal

The Pliatsky report said that the possibility would be examined of transferring responsibility for this tribunal to the Department of the Environment. I am ready to arrange such a transfer but I understand the Department of the Environment would prefer to postpone it because they are reviewing the system of building controls. No doubt, Michael Heseltine will be able to let you know whether this can be resolved by early October.

Central Committee on Common Police Services

It was made clear in the report that this body would be retained but that its activities would be reviewed. It has now been agreed with the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities that in future the full Committee need normally meet only once a year instead of twice. Other arrangements for streamlining committee proceedings have also been agreed in principle and are to be introduced experimentally at the first of the new annual Committee meetings on 14th July.

/Immigration...

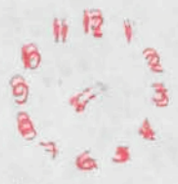
Paul Channon, Esq., M.P.

Immigration Appellate Authorities

There are two aspects of the activities of the immigration appellate authorities which present themselves as areas for examination. The first is whether to reduce the existing rights of appeal, but as you will appreciate this is an area of major controversy. If we wished to pursue such a course, complex and bitterly contested legislation would be required. The other aspect we are considering is the rules of procedure. We are already embarked on an internal review which I would hope to complete in the summer. But we are also committed to outside consultations and are statutorily required to consult the Council on Tribunals. I see no prospect of either of these exercises being completed by early October. My officials will however be in touch with yours about this and the other matters raised in your letter in due course.

I should perhaps also add that two bodies, which the Pliatzky report listed as to be abolished in due course, have now been abolished. These are the Frequency Advisory Committee and the Regional Probation Staff Development Consultative Committee.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.



Gov't Mach

SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Paul Channon Esq MP
Minister of State
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AZ

10 June 1980

Dear Paul,

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 21 April to John Biffen.

I have the following observations about the bodies attributed to my Department in the 'mopping-up' list.

Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland and the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland

I can confirm that the review of these two bodies and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland continues. Although it is too early to offer a definite conclusion about their future, indications are that abolition of either of these bodies is unlikely: the greatest economy can probably be achieved by making each more cost-effective and in ensuring that there is no duplication of effort.

Central Midwives Board (Scotland) and the General Nursing Council for Scotland

These two bodies should be removed from this list as decisions have been taken to replace them, along with other nursing bodies, when the provisions of the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979 are implemented. The existing bodies and the new unified statutory framework will run in tandem for a period before the existing bodies are abolished.

Electricity Consultative Councils (2)

Their future is encompassed within John Nott's recent proposal to consider the establishment of a single consumer council for the nationalised industries. It is proposed that the working group of officials will report to Ministers in the autumn.

Governing Bodies of Central Institutions (11) and Governing Bodies of Colleges of Education (10)

The internal structure of both sets of bodies is under review by the Council for Tertiary Education. However, abolition is not an option: therefore, their continued inclusion in the list might lead to mis-interpretation about their future. In summary, it seems to me that the only bodies which are properly included in the 'mopping-up' list for my interests are the Electricity Consultative Councils - and I shall be in touch with John Nott about this in due course.

I can confirm that we have acted on your request relating to paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Pliatzky Report, and have also noted the need to keep in touch with your Department and the Treasury over the setting-up or reconstitution etc of non-departmental bodies.

Copies of this letter go to recipients of yours.

Yours ever,

Cunliffe

PI

Govt Hosp

MAP

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Paul Channon Esq MP
Minister of State
Civil Service Department
Old Admiralty Building
Whitehall
London SW1

10 June 1980

Dear Paul,

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 21 April to John Biffen about the follow-up to the Pliatzky Report.

I can confirm that the list annexed to your letter contains all our bodies mentioned as being subject to further review in the Pliatzky Report. These reviews are not all concerned with the need to retain a particular body: as the Report makes clear, I am also looking at ways in which particular bodies might better fulfil their role and become more effective. In addition to the bodies in your list, my officials have been examining a number of others, and I may therefore be able to add to the list by the time the mopping-up operation is complete. At the end of the list you mention that the structure of the National Health Service is also under review. My officials are in correspondence with yours about the position of the NHS, which was excluded from the Pliatzky Review, but I should say here that I believe it is right for the NHS to continue to be dealt with separately. To do otherwise could run contrary to our policy of disengagement from the detailed management of the Health Service.

On the timetable, it is unlikely that a decision will have been reached by the autumn on the future of the benefit tribunal system (Medical Appeal Tribunals, National Insurance Local Tribunals, Supplementary Benefit Appeal Tribunals). A preliminary study by our management services branch has only just been completed. The study raises some very wide issues; and, while it support the concept of a merger between Supplementary Benefit Appeal Tribunals and National Insurance Local Tribunals, it identifies a number of hurdles which have first to be cleared. We must also, I am sure, wait to gauge the effect on the appeal system of a revised supplementary benefit scheme which is to be introduced from November before reaching final decisions. As to the other bodies mentioned, I expect to reach a decision within your timetable.

I am assuming from your paragraph 3 that the obligation to publish information about salaries and expenses of board members and the costs of their staff relates only to executive bodies with which the relevant section (paragraphs 45-49) of the Pliatzky Report is concerned. I shall take steps to this end with the relatively small number of DHSS bodies involved.

E. R.

I accept that the Treasury and Civil Service Department should in future be consulted about the establishment of all Non-Departmental Public Bodies (as defined within the Pliatzky Report). I should make the point however that DHSS is, as you know, responsible for a large number of advisory bodies with small budgets (usually consisting only of expenses), no executive powers, and no staff of their own; and I am anxious that we should not impose upon ourselves more elaborate consultation procedures than we need - at significant cost in staff resources without any significant return in resource savings. I would like to suggest, therefore, that we review the consultation arrangements after a year and - if the review should justify it - be ready to consider the possibility of confining consultation to the executive-type organisations to which the Prime Minister related paragraph 70 of the Pliatzky Report in the letter from No 10 of 11 December 1979. Likewise, as Mark Carlisle points out, we must ensure that the arrangements for further review and monitoring, which I gather officials are now discussing, are set up as economically as possible.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours ever

Patrick

Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
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Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 6106 (Llinell Union)
Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 6106 (Direct Line)
From The Secretary of State for Wales

16 May 1980

Dear Paul

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 21 April to John Biffen about the follow up to Sir Leo Pliatzky's report (Cmnd 7797).

I can confirm that the provisional list attached to your letter is correct so far as my Department is concerned. Decisions about the future of the Land Authority for Wales have already been taken and are embodied in the relevant provisions of the Local Government, Planning and Land (No 2) Bill which is now before the House of Commons. Our review of the ancient monuments and historic buildings bodies is making good progress within the Welsh Office, although in this matter we will need to consult with the Department of the Environment and Scottish Office, and I cannot therefore forecast exactly when we shall reach conclusions.

You asked that action should be taken to implement the recommendations in Cmnd 7797 relating to the inclusion of appropriate information about salaries and expenses of board members and staff in published accounts and I confirm that this is being done. We will also ensure that any proposals for new bodies, or the reconstitution of existing bodies, will be formally discussed with CSD and the Treasury as you request.

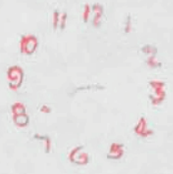
Action on the other matters you mention will have to await the approaches foreshadowed in your letter.

I am sending copies of this letter to the other recipients of yours.

Yours ever

Nick

Paul Channon Esq MP, Minister of State
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AZ



BV

Gov Mach

ELIZABETH HOUSE,
YORK ROAD,
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr Paul Channon MP
Minister of State
Civil Service Department
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

30 April 1980

Dear Paul

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

You sent me a copy of your letter of 21 April to John Biffen about the follow-up to the Pliatzky Report.

I can confirm that the DES bodies still to be dealt with in the "mopping up" operation are as given in your list. I have taken a decision on one of these, and consultations are proceeding on the remaining two. I see no difficulty in meeting your proposed timetable.

My officials will shortly be taking steps to ensure that all the bodies in our field are conscious of, and comply with, the recommendations in Paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Pliatzky Report.

I have noted the requirement to consult with Treasury and CSD on the creation or reconsititution of non-departmental bodies, and my Department will follow this procedure. In this context, it will be helpful to have the more detailed guidance which your officials are preparing, particularly if there are to be differences in the handling of different types of body.

We shall await with interest your proposals for further reviews of existing bodies. I am glad that you stress the need for this to be done as simply and economically as possible; in view of the severe manpower restraints which my Department, like others, will be under in the future, I would regard this as essential.

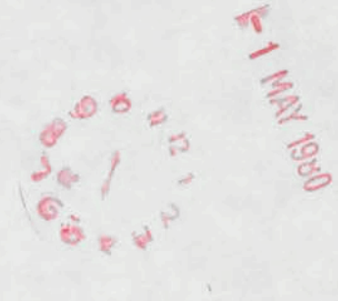
The same manpower considerations will also need to be balanced against the attractions of collecting and publishing annually an up-to-date list of basic information about non-departmental bodies.

Copies of this letter go to recipients of yours.

Yours ever

Mark

MARK CARLISLE


1 MAY 1980

with compliments

MINISTER OF STATE

CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone 01-273 5563/4086